INTERNATIONAL PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND ACADEMIC SCINENCE

# A CORPUS BASED STUDY ON THE PREPOSITION ERROR TYPES IN TURKISH EFL LEARNERS ESSAYS <sup>1</sup>

Mehmet TUNAZ 1, Emrah MUYAN 2, Nursel MURATOĞLU 3

1-2-3 Erciyes University, School of Foreign Languages, Kayseri / Turkey

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the categories of preposition errors made by EFL learners of elementary and intermediate proficiency levels by comparing the rate of preposition errors (addition, omission, substitution) to their total preposition uses in their essays, and by comparing the overall preposition usage of learners of both proficiency levels. The study was conducted with 75 learners of elementary level (A2) and 75 learners of intermediate level at Erciyes University School of Foreign Languages. Initially, 550 elementary and 230 intermediate level essays were scanned, and 75 exam papers for each group were randomly chosen as the sample of the research. In the analysis, depending on Grammar of Spoken and Written English of Biber et al. (1999), total preposition numbers and erroneous preposition uses in each essay were counted and color coded by the researchers by blind-checking the papers separately to assure the reliability. Then, the erroneous prepositions were subcategorized as addition, omission and substitution according to Corder's (1973) Common Errors in English and Categorization of Error Types. The results of the independent-sample t-test indicated that; a) there was no difference between groups in terms of addition type error; b) learners of elementary level made statistically more omission type errors than learners of intermediate learners; c) learners of intermediate level made statistically more substitution type errors than learners of elementary level; d) percentages of preposition errors to total preposition usage in elementary level essays were statistically higher than those of intermediate level. In the light of the findings of this research, the importance of teaching preposition in chunks for elementary level, and providing learners of intermediate level with more detailed linguistic features of preposition were emphasized.

Key Words: Preposition, Proficiency Level, Error Types, Categorization, Essay

Doi: 10.17368/UHBAB.20161722361

<sup>(1)</sup> Corresponding Author: Mehmet TUNAZ, Erciyes University, School of Foreign Languages, Kayseri / Turkey mehmet\_tunaz@hotmail.com Received: 14.04.2016 Accepted: 21.09.2016 Type ofarticle (Research and Practice) Conflict of Interest: None Ethics Committee: None









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

> JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

### INTRODUCTION

The proper use of prepositions in English is of perennial concern to the linguistics field in general. According to Loke and Anthony (2013), preposition usage is one of the most challenging aspects of English grammar for learners to master, and Swan (1988) also asserts that it is not an easy task to learn to use prepositions correctly in a foreign language. Castro, M.C.S.A. (2013) defines prepositions as words that show the relationship between two words in a sentence. These relationships involve those of time, position, direction, and various degrees of mental and emotional states.

Though it is defined clearly in literature why prepositions are so difficult to master, there are many reasons why students still find learning and using prepositions correctly difficult. Özişik (2014) states that there are no specific rules regarding the usage of prepositions, and this creates problems for both teachers and learners. Many course books just have a general overview of prepositions and do not provide specific rules to facilitate the acquisition of preposition properly.

The other reason is the high number of prepositions and the high degree of polysemy, which make a great contribution to the difficulties in acquiring correct usage (Catalán,

1996: 171-187). Learners may get frustrated when determining prepositional meanings and trying to use them appropriately (Koffi, 2010). The polysemous nature of prepositions makes the task of mastering rather difficult. A preposition might bear multiple meanings depending on the given context, and similarly some verbs might require an obligatory preposition. However, students fail to notice this rule, and they learn verbs by ignoring the idea that they may require a specific follow-up preposition (French, 1961: 274-277).

Different prepositional systems in different languages may cause confusion while choosing the correct preposition. Learners cannot depend on the knowledge of prepositions from their native language (Catalán, 1996: 171-187). In this regard, Lam (2009) states that the false assumptions of semantic equivalence between the first and second languages may induce prepositional errors.

# **REVIEW of LITERATURE**

While learning English as a foreign language, students may make a number of errors. And, preposition errors may stand out as one of the most problematic areas in the process of producing the target language. Students' writing tasks usually indicate that they have difficulty in using the correct prepositions. Hermet and Desilets (2009) claim that preposi-









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

tion choice accounted for 17.2% of all errors. However, according to Corder (1967), errors are not only inevitable but also very important to observe improvement, so most of the errors are termed as developmental errors. Corder (1967) adds that errors are crucial to investigate how languages are learned and acquired and what strategies or procedures a learner is employing in the discovery of language. Hence, high numbers of preposition errors in students' essays have aroused the interest of many researchers who have tried to describe the problems regarding the achievement of these small units, and figure out the possible reasons behind these errors. Corder (1973) categorized errors as omission of some required elements; addition of some unnecessary elements; selection of incorrect elements; and disordering of some elements.

Bram (2005) examined prepositional errors in the writings of 50 students. He analyzed the most frequently occurring prepositional problems in three categories as the use of an incorrect preposition, the omission of a required preposition, and the use of an unnecessary preposition. The findings showed that the misuse of prepositions was the most frequent category, and the three categories of preposition problems proved to stem from the interference of the learners' mother tongue.

Another study by Tahaineh (2010) in investigating the types of errors of prepositions and determining the possible sources of the prepositions showed that interference from the native language and the influence of the target language itself were the main sources of prepositional errors. In addition to the problematic categories of prepositions and their possible sources, he was also interested in the relationship between different proficiency levels. He found out that learners' performance differs significantly from one item to another among the three proficiency levels.

In another study conducted by Estevez, Gomez and Gonzalez (2010), the use of prepositions by the students of an upper intermediate English course from the ELT program at Universidad Industrial De Santander was analyzed. It had as a basis a quantitative study whose results were analyzed qualitatively to find common cases of errors of prepositions. The data for this research was collected from the writing production section of the 3 exams which students took during the semester. 54 pieces of writing were collected. Quantitative findings showed 13 prepositions (to, on, about, in, of, at, for, from, with, by, above, because of, into) were the most problematic ones out of 71 errors of prepositions identified. It was found that the most common error was the misuse of prepositions, which was









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

present 30 different times, while the omission of prepositions appeared 25 different times, and the addition of prepositions occurred 16 different times.

The study by Khotaba (2013), conducted from a performance analysis perspective aimed to investigate the frequency and kind of preposition and adverb particle errors. The findings of the study showed that the occurrence of the errors was related to native language interference or the learners' inadequate knowledge of the target language, and their unawareness of multiple meanings and functions of English prepositions.

Castro (2013) conducted a study to investigate the extent of Filipino's interference in the use of English prepositions in the compositions written by college students at the University of the Philippines. The findings showed that the interference of Filipino is minimal because of the dominance of intralingual over inter-lingual errors.

In a study, Özişik (2014) aimed to find out to what extent Turkish EFL students are successful in the use of prepositions, and how much impact their mother tongue has on their errors. He gave a 60-sentence gap-filling test to 30 students in the upper-intermediate level of a university preparatory school. They were asked to fill in the gaps with a suitable prepo-

sition or put a (-) if no preposition is necessary. The result of the test showed that even at this level, students have great difficulty in finding the correct preposition, with a significant number of errors resulting from mother tongue interference.

As the literature reveals, students' writings may be a useful source to analyse preposition errors since they provide substantial information about students' awareness on preposition usage. In this vein, this study aims to define the types of errors, their possible sources, and the distribution of problematic preposition patterns. In this study, the incorrect usage of prepositions is aimed to be analysed in three categories: omission, addition and substitution according to learners' proficiency level. In this regard, this study attempts to find answers to following research questions:

- 1. Is there a significant difference between learners of elementary (A2) and intermediate (B2) proficiency levels in terms of differing preposition error types (addition, omission, substitution)?
- 2. Is there a significant difference between learners of elementary (A2) and intermediate (B2) proficiency levels in terms of total preposition error counts compared to total preposition use in their essays?









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770
ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

By answering these research questions, the researchers aimed to reveal the kinds of preposition errors made by learners of different proficiency levels, and find out possible reasons behind these errors. Many researchers confined their studies to the qualitative analysis of types of errors, but mostly ignored proficiency levels of the learners. However, in order to fill the gap in literature, this study considers the comparisons of learners' proficiency levels in a quantitative research frame by examining the distribution of misused patterns of prepositions.

Language teaching cannot be separated from the findings of error analysis. Hence, students' errors have always drawn the attention of researchers, teachers, test developers and material developers. The data from this study may provide a chance for educators to develop appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques, and construct tests suitable for different proficiency levels (e.g. Corder, 1986; Richards, 1974; Brown, 2000).

## **METHODOLOGY**

# **Participants**

The sample consists of 150 students studying at two different sections of English preparatory class at the School of Foreign Languages, Erciyes University. The two sections

differ from one another in terms of the levels of English taught and the prospective departments of the subjects. Students were classified as A2 and B2 according to their level of proficiency in English. A2 level subjects are general preparation class learners (N= 75), and their prospective departments are mainly Nursing, Engineering, and Economics and Administrative Sciences. On the other hand, B2 level subjects (N=75) are the preparation class learners of either English Language Teaching or English Language and Literature departments. These are the only proficiency groups at the School of Foreign Language; therefore, only A2 and B2 levels are included in the research. Since the learners are enrolled in the university according to their performance in the university entrance exam, their scores are generally very close to each other. All the subjects in each category also have similar educational backgrounds in terms of language learning.

### Research Design

The study's research design included random assignment of subjects in each category. A2 level learners (N= 75) were randomly drawn from a population of approximately 1250 students at the School of Foreign Languages whereas B2 level learners (N= 75) were chosen out of nearly 250 learners in the same









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880)
(MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK)
(2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

way. This design controls for linguistic backgrounds of subjects and testing threats to validity. The theoretical basis for the study's design emerged from Corder's (1973) *Common Errors in English* and *Categorization of Error Types*. Additionally, the study was ecologically valid, observing real L2 students through their L2 essays written in the real exam.

### Variables and Instrumentation

The independent variable of the research was the proficiency levels of the subjects which has two subcategories (A2 and B2 according to CEFRL), and the dependent variable was the number of erroneous preposition usage (error scores) of the learners in three categories (addition, omission, and substitution). The study mainly aims to investigate and explain whether there is a meaningful effect of language proficiency level on the number of erroneous preposition (error scores) by L2 learners, and detect if the differences between two sets of scores are significant enough to assume that they come from two different groups. In this context, it is clear that the independent variable is categorical with exactly two levels (A2 and B2) while dependent variable scale is interval, resulting with an independent sample t-test, which would be the

most appropriate statistical test for the design of the research.

### **Procedure and Data Collection**

In order to investigate the erroneous use of preposition in three different sub-categories (addition, omission, and substitution), writing exam papers of 550 A2 level learners and 230 B2 level learners were scanned, and 75 exam papers for each group were randomly picked out as the sample of the research. The number of erroneous prepositions was identified by the researchers by using colorcoding on the printed versions of the essays according to Grammar of Spoken and Written English by Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, Finegan, and Quirk (1999). Following the detailed analysis of the printed papers by blindchecking each essay separately to assure the reliability, the precise numbers of total prepositions and erroneous preposition uses in each exam paper were identified according to Corder's (1973) Common Errors in English. Then, the erroneous prepositions were classified into three subcategories: addition (using a preposition when it is not necessary), omission (excluding a preposition when it is necessary), and substitution (using a preposition instead of the proper one) according to Corder's (1973) Categorization of Error Types. Moreover, total numbers of erroneous









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

preposition of two groups (A2 and B2) were also identified and compared to have an overall perspective of the results.

# **Limitations of the Study**

This research involved learners of elementary and intermediate level since these are the only proficiency level groups at the School of Foreign Languages, Erciyes University. However, other proficiency levels might be included in order to obtain more generalizable results by increasing the scope of the design. Comparing these findings to the results of similar studies conducted at other univer-

sities (if any) might also provide wider and more profound perspective of the topic.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

In this research, both distribution and normality of the data were checked and presented visually. Table 1 contains the mean scores and standard deviations of the groups, and considering the standard deviations in all score types, there are two or more standard deviations in either direction from the mean scores. This gives an overall idea on the distribution of the data which is also checked with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 1. Summary Data of the Proficiency Groups

		A2	B2	
Number of Add.Error	Mean	,99	,95	
	Sd	,385	,364	
	N	75	75	
Number of Omis.Error	Mean	3,01	,99	
	Sd	,450	,419	
	N	75	75	
Number of Subs. Error	Mean	1,03	3,96	
	Sd	,434	,505	
	N	75	75	
Percentage of Error/Total Prep.	Mean	33,0904	16,3717	
	Sd	7,49622	4,14812	
	N	75	75	









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK)

.RKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARI (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

As seen in Table 2, the numbers of participants is equal in both groups (A2= 75, B2= 75), and owing to the number of subjects, Kolmogorov Smirnov test results are taken into consideration. In order to check the distribution of the data, percentage of erroneous preposition in total preposition uses were taken into account since it reflects the general characteristic of the data used in this

research. According to Kolmogorov Smirnov test results, significance level for B2 group's Percentage of Error variable is over .05, meaning that these data are normally distributed. Though significance level of the same variable for A2 group is very slightly below .05, it might also be assumed as normally distributed.

**Table 2. Test of Normality** 

	Proficiency levels	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Percentage of Error/Total Prep.	A2	,104	75	,048
	B2	,088	75	,200*

Figure 1 indicates that the distribution of error percentage in total preposition uses for A2 and B2 levels seems very parallel to the

normality curve meaning that the data are suitable for a parametric test (independent-sample t-test).









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

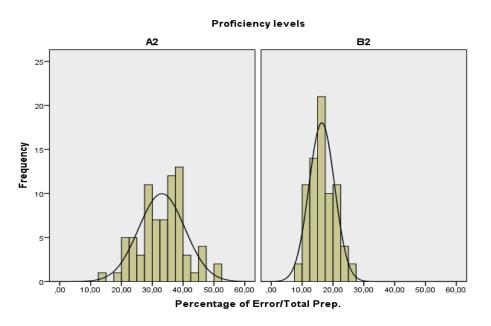
Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science

July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016 JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880)

(MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

Figure 1. Distribution of Error Percentages in Proficiency Groups



The data (erroneous preposition counts) from A2 and B2 level learners' essays were subjected to independent-sample t-test in order to test the null hypothesis of no difference between level groups in terms of preposition error types (addition, omission, and substitution) and preposition error counts. An examination of the data indicated that these data

are normally distributed and variances were equal for the groups (Sig.> .05), except for Percentage of Error variable (Sig.< .05) as seen in Table 3. Hence, the value of "equal variances not assumed" is presented while reporting this variable.









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science

July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016 JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770

ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK)

(2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

# Table 3. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Number of Add.Error	Equal variances assumed	,119	,731
Number of Omis.Error	Equal variances assumed	,174	,677
Number of Subs. Error	Equal variances assumed	1,284	,259
Percentage of Error/Total Prep.	Equal variances not assumed	20,163	,000

As shown in Table 4, the results of independent-sample t-test have four dimensions;

- 1. For the addition error count (A2 mean = .99, sd = .385, N = 75; B2 mean = .95, sd = .36, N = 75), the 95% CI for the difference in means is -.08, .16 (t = .65, p = .51, df = 148 using Welch's procedure). The null hypothesis that "there is no difference between the groups in terms of addition type preposition error" could not be rejected, and the effect size for the difference between groups was very small (d = .11).
- 2. For the omission error count (A2 mean = 3.01, sd = .45, N=75; B2 mean = .99, sd = .42, N = 75), the 95% CI for the difference in means is 1.89, 2.17 (t = 28.5, p = .000, df = 148 using Welch's procedure). The null hypothesis that "there is no difference between the groups in terms of omission type preposition error" can be rejected with a very large effect size (d = 4.85).
- 3. For the substitution error count (A2 mean = 1.03, sd = .43, N = 75; B2 mean = 3.96, sd = .51, N = 75), the 95% CI for the difference in means is -3.1, -2.8 (t = 38.1, p = .000, df= 148 using Welch's procedure). The null hypothesis that "there is no difference between the groups in terms of substitution type preposition error" can also be rejected, and the effect size for the difference between groups was very large (d = 6.21).
- **4.** For the overall percentage of preposition errors compared to total preposition used by each subject (A2 mean = 33.1, sd = 7.5, n = 75; B2 mean = 16.4, sd = 4.1, N = 75), the 95% CI for the difference in means is 14.76, 18.68 (t = 16.9, p = .000, df = 148 using Welch's procedure). The null hypothesis that "there is no difference between the groups in terms of total preposition error percentage" can be rejected









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science

July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

with a large effect size (d = 2.76), though smaller than item 2 and 3.

**Table 4. Statistical Results** 

	Prof. levels	Mean	Sd.	p	t	d	95% CI
Number of Add.Error	A2	.99	.385	.51	.65	.11	08, .16
	B2	.95	.36				
Number of Omis.Error	A2	3.01	.45	.000	28.5	4.85	1.89, 2.17
	B2	.99	.42				
Number of Subs. Error	A2	1.03	.43	.000	38.1	6.21	-3.1, -2.8
	B2	3.96	.51				
Percentage of Error/Total Prep.	A2	33.1	7.5	.000	16.9	2.76	14.76, 18.68
	B2	16.4	4.1				

# **DISCUSSION**

Prepositions are one of the most challenging units which should be used correctly in learning English as a foreign language as stated by Swan (1988) and Loke and Antony (2013). Parallel to the current research, the previous studies in literature have revealed that preposition usage imposes a remarkable difficulty for learners in all proficiency levels (Bram, 2005; Tahaineh, 2010: 76-112; Estevez, Gomez and Gonzalez, 2010; Özışık, 2014: 59-69).

As the current study found out, while there is no significant difference between learners of elementary (A2) and intermediate (B2) proficiency levels in terms of using a preposition when it is not necessary (addition), there is a significant difference in excluding a preposition when it is necessary (omission) and using a preposition instead of the proper one (substitution). Considering omission type errors, the research indicated that learners of elementary (A2) level usually tend to omit the necessary preposition. There might be a few reasons to explain this trend. As the first reason, French (1961) states that students commonly learn verbs ignoring the idea that they may require a follow-up specific preposition such as "listen (to), want (to), wait (for), look (after) baby, need (to)" (common errors from the elementary level students' essays).









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

Students generally look up the meaning of unknown words and they find the English equivalents, but because of their low level of proficiency, they may not know the rule that certain verbs require a preposition; therefore, they may fail to use appropriate prepositions when they are necessary. Another reason may be the learners' L1 interference. Lam (2009) states that the false assumptions of semantic equivalence between the first and second languages may induce prepositional errors. For example, in Turkish, it is proper to say "beni bekle" (wait me), which does not require a preposition in the Turkish form; therefore, students may assume that they do not need to use a preposition in the target language as well. Hence, they neglect the necessary preposition in the English form "wait for me", which might deteriorate the transmission of ideas in the target language.

As for substitution errors, the study indicated that learners of intermediate level are inclined to misuse a preposition instead of the proper one more often than learners of elementary level. The reasons behind this finding may also stem from the interference of the learners' mother tongue. For example, learners of intermediate level repeatedly used in their essays "He is married *with* Sally", although the correct preposition should be "to" according to Biber et al. (1999). This may be consid-

ered to be an interlingual error since, in Turkish, the instrumental form "ile, (y)le, (y)la" are used with the phrase "be married", which means that English instrumental form "with" would be a direct translation from Turkish. Similarly, learners usually misuse "on + day" especially when there is extra word between the preposition and noun. For example, some learners wrote "at your exam day, at this day, at next Monday" in their essays. It is clear that learners usually misuse preposition patterns which include extra words.

As opposed to learners of elementary level, learners of intermediate level usually have higher linguistic awareness to detect some verbs or adjectives which require a preposition. However, they may have difficulty in recalling or determining the appropriate preposition during their in-class essays, which may explain the high percentage of substitution errors in their essays. The related studies in literature also have parallel results regarding substitution errors. In their study conducted with learners of upper intermediate ELT learners, Estevez, Gomez and Gonzalez (2010) found that the most common error was the misuse of prepositions which was present 30 different times out of 71 total preposition usages. Similarly, Bram's (2005) study with 50 learners showed the misuse of preposi-









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770
ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880)
(MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK)
(2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

tions was the most frequent category, which supports the findings of the current research.

Regarding the second research question of whether there is a significant difference between learners of elementary (A2) and intermediate (B2) proficiency levels in terms of total preposition error compared to total preposition used in their essays, the findings of this study were not surprising due to the time span the learners have dedicated to language learning. As learners of intermediate level have been exposed intensively to the target language in various ways such as reading, listening and speaking activities, and grammar/ vocabulary materials, they are much more familiar with the correct use of prepositions. Therefore, the rates of preposition errors to the total preposition usage in intermediate learners' essays were much less than in those of elementary learners' essays.

In conclusion, it has been observed that proper preposition usage is still a lingering problem for learners regardless of their proficiency levels. However, as understood from the findings of this study, the error types differ from elementary to intermediate level. Hence, various teaching methods and materials on prepositions should be adjusted for learners of different levels. For elementary level, lexical collocations might be used to

teach preposition in chunks, which might decrease the rate of omission errors by making it easier to retain. For intermediate level, learners' awareness might be increased by providing them with more detailed linguistic features of prepositions to decrease the rate of substitution errors.

### REFERENCES

AL KHOTABA, E., (2013). Errors in the use of prepositions and adverb particles by Arab ESL speakers: Performance analysis perspective. International Journal of Linguistics, 5(1): 273

BIBER, D., et. al., (1999). Longman grammar of spoken and written English (Vol. 2). MIT Press: Longman

BRAM, B., (2005). Some Common Problems Involving Prepositions in Writing English in a Multilingual Context. Retrieved from: http://www.academia.edu

*CASTRO, M. C. S. A., (2013).* An analysis of prepositional errors of college students. In Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching: 97-108

*CATALÁN*, *R. J.*, (1996). Frequency and variability in errors in the use of English prepositions. Miscelánea: A Journal of









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

- English and American Studies, 17: 171-187
- *CORDER, S. P., (1967).* The significance of learners" errors. International Review of Applied Linguistics, 5(4): 161-169
- *CORDER*, *S. P.*, *(1973)*. Introducing Applied Linguistics. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- FRENCH, F., (1961). Common errors in English. London: Oxford UP: 274-277
- tion of the errors regarding prepositions usage in students of the Upper intermediate English course from the ELT Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander. Research Project, retrieved from: http://repositorio.uis.edu.co/jspui/bitstream/123456789/9045/2/133976.pdf
- *KOFFI, E., (2010).* Applied English Syntax: Foundations for word, phrase and sentence analysis. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company
- *LAM*, *Y*, *(2009)*. Applying Cognitive linguistics to teaching the Spanish preposition Por and para. Language Awareness, 18(1): 2-18

- LOKE, D. L., et. al., (2013). A Corpus Based Study on the Use of Preposition of Time 'on' and 'at' in Argumentative Essays of Form 4 and Form 5 Malaysian Students. English Language Teaching, 6(9): 128
- LORINCZ, K., GORDON, R., (2013). Difficulties in Learning Prepositions and Possible Solutions. Linguistic Portfolios, 1(1): 14
- *ÖZIŞIK, C., (2014).* Identifying preposition errors of Turkish EFL students. ELT Research Journal, 3(2): 59-69
- SWAN, M., (1988). Practical English usage. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- *TAHAINEH, Y. S., (2010).* Arab EFL university students' errors in the use of prepositions. Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics, *1*(6): 76-112
- YUSUF, Y. Q., (2009). A Corpus-Based Linguistics Analysis on Written Corpus: Colligation of "TO" and "FOR". Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 5(2): 104-122









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: I20-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770
ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880) (MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK) (2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

# İNGİLİZ DİLİNİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN KOMPOZİSYONLARINDA YER ALAN EDAT HATA ÇEŞİTLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR DERLEM ÇALIŞMASI

Öz: Edatlar, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenler için sık sık problemle karşılaşılan bir konudur. Bu sebeple, özellikle dilbilgisi öğretiminin en zorlayıcı olarak kabul edilen konularından birisidir. Bu durumun başlıca sebepleri, İngilizcede birçok edat kullanımının belirli kurallara bağlı olmaması ve İngilizcede çok fazla sayıda edat bulunmasıdır. Farklı dil becerisi düzeyindeki öğrencilerin edat kullanım sıklıklarının, hatalı edat kullanım sıklıklarının ve yapılan hata çeşitlerinin incelenmesi edatların daha etkin öğretilmesi hususunda önemli ipuçları verebilmektedir. Bu nedenle güncel çalışmanın araştırma soruları şu şekildedir: (1) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen başlangıç düzeyi (A2) ile orta yeterlik (B2) düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin edat kullanım hataları (addition, omission, substitution) arasında anlamlı farklılık var mıdır?; (2) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen başlangıç düzeyi (A2) ile orta yeterlik (B2) düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin kompozisyonlarında edat kullanım hataları ve edat kullanım sıklıkları arasında anlamlı fark var mıdır? Güncel çalışmanın temel amacı İngiliz dilini yabancı dil olarak öğrenen, başlangıç ve orta yeterlik düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin kompozisyon yazarken yaptıkları edat hatalarının gruplandırılması ve incelenmesidir. Edat hataları (gereksiz edat ekleme, gerekli edatı ihmal etme, gerekli edat yerine farklı bir edat kullanma) oranlarının öğrencilerin kompozisyonlarındaki toplam edat kullanım oranlarıyla kıyaslanması ve yeterlik seviyelerine göre öğrencilerin edat kullanım oranlarının kıyaslanması yöntemleriyle edat hata grupları incelenmiştir. Bu araştırma Erciyes Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulunda 2015- 2016 akademik yılında eğitim hazırlık eğitimi gören 75 başlangıç (A2) seviyesine sahip öğrenci ve 75 orta (B2) yeterlik düzeyine sahip öğrenci ile yapılmıştır. İlk olarak 550 başlangıç düzeyi ve 230 orta seviye öğrencilerin kompozisyonları bilgisayar ortamında taranmış ve rastgele seçim yöntemiyle her iki gruptan da 75'er kompozisyon çalışmanın örneklem grupları olarak seçilmiştir. Analiz aşamasında, Biber ve arkadaşlarının (1999), Grammar of Spoken and Written English kaynağına dayanarak örneklem gruplardaki her bir kompozisyonda geçen toplam edat sayısı ve hatalı edat kullanımları tespit edilmiştir. Edatların hatalı ve doğru kullanımları araştırmacılar tarafından farklı renklerle kodlanmış ve çalışmanın güvenirliği açısından kompozisyonların her









### www.uhbabdergisi.com

Uluslararası Hakemli Beşeri ve Akademik Bilimler Dergisi Temmuz / Ağustos / Eylül – Yaz ve Sonbahar Dönemi Sayı: 17 Yıl:2016 International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Humanities and Academic Science July / August / September - Summer and Autumn Period Number: 17 Year: 2016

JEL CODE: 120-M00-M10-M12-M54 ID:332 K:770 ISSN Print: 2147-4168 Online 2147-5385

(ISO 9001-2008 Belge No / Document No: 12879 & ISO 14001-2004 Belge No / Document No: 12880)
(MARKA PATENT NO: TRADEMARK)
(2015/03947-2015-GE-17304)

biri araştırmacılar tarafında üzerine herhangi bir düzeltme işareti konmadan bağımsız olarak incelenmiştir. Daha sonrasında, hatalı edat kullanımları Corder'un (1973) *Common Errors in English* and *Categorization of Error Types* kaynağına göre 3 gruba ayrılmıştır: gereksiz edat ekleme (addition), gerekli edatı ihmal etme (omission), ve gerekli edat yerine farklı bir edat kullanma (substitution). Bağımsız örneklem t-test sonuçlarına göre; a) çalışma grupları arasında gereksiz edat ekleme (addition) hatası yönünden bir farklılık bulunamamıştır; b) başlangıç yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrenciler, orta seviye yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrencilerden istatiksel olarak daha fazla gerekli edatı ihmal etme (omission) hatası yapmışlardır; c) orta yeterlik düzeyine sahip öğrenciler başlangıç düzeyindeki öğrencilere göre istatiksel olarak daha fazla gerekli edat yerine farklı bir edat kullanım (substitution) hatası yapmışlardır; d) hatalı edat kullanımının toplam edat kullanımlarına oranları, başlangıç düzeyindeki öğrencilerin kompozisyonlarında, orta yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrencilerin kompozisyonlarından istatistiksel olarak daha yüksek olarak bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmanın bulgularına dayanarak, başlangıç düzeyindeki öğrencilere edatların kelime gruplarıyla birlikte öğretilmesi ve orta yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrencilere edatların daha detaylı dil bilimsel özelliklerinin sağlanması gerekliliği vurgulanmıştır.